

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 181512

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INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 /018 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:INR/RSE:JCOLLINS

APPROVED BY:INR:HHSAUNDERS

INR/DDR:MPACKMAN

REA:ARDA Y

INR/RNA:GHARRIS

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P 231358Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 181512

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SAUNDERS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 181512 ACTION DAMASCUS INFO AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO
MOSCOW JUL 22, 76

QUOTE:

S E C R E T STATE 181512

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, UR

SUBJECT: ALLEGED BREZHNEV MESSAGE TO ASAD

REF: DAMASCUS 4796

1. WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT INFORMATION TO SUBSTANTIATE THE
AUTHENTICITY OF THE TEXT OF THE ALLEGED PERSONAL MESSAGE
TO ASAD FROM BREZHNEV QUOTED IN THE JULY 20 LE MONDE, OR
TO QUESTION ASAD'S REPORTED DENIAL (REFTEL) THAT HE
SECRET

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RECEIVED A TOUGH MESSAGE FROM THE SOVIETS.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE STYLE AND FORM OF THE LE MONDE TEXT IS
INCONCLUSIVE. IT IS INCOMPLETE IN THE LE MONDE ARTICLE;

MOREOVER, ACCORDING TO THE PAPER, ITS VERSION IS A TRANSLATION FROM ARABIC TO FRENCH AND NOW, OF COURSE, INTO ENGLISH.

3. THE CONTENT OF THE LE MONDE MESSAGE DOES CONFORM TO RECENT SOVIET PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE:

--CHARGED THAT LEBANESE EVENTS WARM THE HEARTS OF THE IMPERIALISTS;

--CALLED FOR A HALT TO THE FIGHTING;

--SUPPORTED THE PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE LEFTIST CAUSE;
AND

--LEVELED CRITICISM AT SYRIA'S MILITARY ROLE IN THE WAR.

4. HOWEVER, THE ALLEGED TEXT GOES FURTHER THAN ANY PREVIOUS TEXTS WE HAVE SEEN BY IMPLICITLY MAKING CONTINUATION OF SOVIET FRIENDSHIP DEPENDENT ON SYRIAN WILLINGNESS TO AVOID BEHAVIOR WHICH "MAKES FISSURES APPEAR" IN THE RELATIONSHIP. WE DO NOT DOUBT THE SOVIETS' ABILITY TO DEMONSTRATE UNEXPECTED BLUNTNESS AND IT SEEMS LIKELY THE SOVIETS WOULD WANT THE PALESTINIANS AND LIBYANS TO BELIEVE THEY ARE PRESSING SYRIA HARD. HOWEVER, THE IMPLIED THREAT THAT SOVIET FRIENDSHIP WILL CEASE UNLESS SYRIA CEASES ITS CAMPAIGN IN LEBANON SEEMS TO REPRESENT A RISK-ALL APPROACH WHICH WOULD BE UNCHARACTERISTIC OF SOVIET BEHAVIOR, AT LEAST IN A WRITTEN DOCUMENT TREATED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE ITS PUBLICATION LIKELY.

5. DOUBT IS ALSO CAST ON THE MESSAGE'S AUTHENTICITY BY LE MONDE'S REPORT THAT IT WAS "COMMUNICATED" TO THE PLO, KEMAL JUMBLATT, LEADERS OF THE "PROGRESSIVE FRONT," AND IRAQ AND LIBYA. MOSCOW FREQUENTLY CIRCULARIZES OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF POLICY OR VIEWS, BUT FOR THE SOVIETS TO TRANSMIT "DROP COPIES" OF A PERSONAL MESSAGE OF THIS
SECRET

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CHARACTER FROM BREZHNEV TO THESE ADDRESSEES, PARTICULARLY JUMBLATT, WOULD BE QUITE UNUSUAL.

6. FOR THESE REASONS, WE BELIEVE THERE IS A QUESTION ABOUT THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE LE MONDE TEXT. ARABS OPPOSING SYRIA WOULD HAVE AN INTEREST IN CREATING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE USSR IS BEHIND THEM. IN SAYING THIS, I EMPHASIZE THAT I AM ADDRESSING ONLY THE LIMITED QUESTION OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS SUPPOSED TEXT. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE SYRIANS AND SOVIETS ARE AT ODDS OVER SYRIA'S LEBANON POLICY, AND SHARP DISAGREEMENT HAS APPEARED IN THEIR EXCHANGES. ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE SOVIETS PUT THEIR VIEWS IN WRITING IN THIS WAY, WE

THINK IT IS WORTH CONSIDERING THAT THE LE MONDE TEXT IS
A MISREPRESENTATION. ROBINSON UNQUOTE
ROBINSON

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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